



The Sixty-fourth Season of
The William Nelson Cromwell and F. Lammot Belin
Concerts

National Gallery of Art
2,557th Concert

Anthony and Joseph Paratore
Piano Duo

January 29, 2006
Sunday Evening, 6:30 pm
West Building, West Garden Court

Admission free

Program

Richard Strauss (1864–1949)

Don Juan, op. 20

Arranged for two pianos four hands by Ludwig Thuille (1861–1907)

Richard Strauss

Waltzes from “Der Rosenkavalier,” op. 59

Arranged for two pianos four hands by Victor Babin (1908–1972)

Richard Strauss

Till Eulenspiegel’s Merry Pranks, op. 28

Arranged for two pianos four hands by Otto Singer

INTERMISSION

Maurice Ravel (1875–1937)

Ma mère l’oye (Mother Goose)

Pavane de la Belle au bois dormant (The Pavane of Sleeping Beauty)

Petit poucet (Hop-o’-my-thumb)

Laideronette, impératrice des pagodes

(The Ugly Little Girl, Empress of the Pagodas)

Les entretiens de la Belle et la Bête

(The Conversations between Beauty and the Beast)

Le jardin féerique (The Fairy Garden)

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840–1893)

Nutcracker Suite, op. 71a

Arranged for piano four hands by Nicolas Economou (1953–1993)

Overture miniature

Marche

Danse de la fée-dragée (Dance of the Sugarplum Fairies)

Danse russe trépak (Russian Dance)

Danse arabe (Arabian Dance)

Danse chinoise (Chinese Dance)

Danse des mirlitons (Dance of the Reed Flutes)

Valse des fleurs (Waltz of the Flowers)

The Musicians

Whether performing on one piano or two, Anthony and Joseph Paratore bring the art of duo pianism to the highest level. Born in Boston to a family of Italian descent, they began their careers as solo pianists when they were young. By the time Joseph appeared with the Boston Symphony Orchestra at age seventeen, his brother Anthony had already completed a recital tour of South America. They made their acclaimed debut as a duo in New York City in 1973. The *New York Times* reviewer wrote: "If there is a resurgence of duo piano, Anthony and Joseph Paratore should find an important place in the concert world." Both conditions have since materialized: there has been a renewal of interest in piano duos as a concert phenomenon, and the Paratore brothers are at the forefront of that movement. Joachim Kaiser, reviewing one of their concerts in Munich's *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, proclaimed: "They are the princes of the piano. From the beginning there is a witchcraft of ensemble playing with a complete understanding of phrasing, breathing, and trills."

The duo has appeared with most of the world's premiere symphony orchestras, including those of Amsterdam, Berlin, Boston, Chicago, Detroit, New York, San Francisco, and Vienna, under such illustrious conductors as Pierre Boulez, Christoph von Dohnanyi, Rafael Frühbeck de Burgos, Seiji Ozawa, Georg Solti, and Leonard Slatkin. They have repeatedly been invited to perform at prestigious music festivals in major cities, among them Berlin, Lucerne, New York (the Mostly Mozart Festival), Salzburg, and Vienna. Their concert tours have taken them to Asia, Australia, Israel, and other distant destinations. The brothers have also appeared on many radio and television programs such as "All Things Considered," "Performance Today," the "Today Show," and the "Tonight Show."

The recipients of numerous honors and awards, Anthony and Joseph Paratore have been granted membership in the Dante Alighieri Society and awarded the *I Migliore* from the Pirandello Lyceum and the George Washington Medal of Honor. In 1992 a scholarship was established in their name at the Boston Conservatory of Music.

Recently jazz legend Dave Brubeck entrusted the two pianists with the special privilege of recording all of his compositions for two pianos four hands, including his *Points of Jazz*, recorded on the Koch Jazz label. Other recordings on the same label by the Paratore brothers include Brahms' *Liebeslieder Waltzes* with the Berlin Radio Chorus and piano duos by Stravinsky, Gershwin, Milhaud, and Schoenberg. On the Four Winds label, they have recorded Brahms' *Variations on a Theme by Haydn* and *Sonata in F Minor* for piano four hands as well as works by Debussy, Poulenc, Ravel, and Schubert.

Program Notes

Piano duets came into vogue in the middle of the eighteenth century, not long after the piano had replaced the harpsichord as the standard keyboard instrument in the home and on the concert stage. The medium was placed in the international spotlight by the famous pair of child prodigies, Wolfgang and Nannerl Mozart (1756–1791 and 1751–1829), who were presented as a piano duo all over Europe by their enterprising father, Leopold Mozart (1719–1787). A family portrait from about 1780 by Johann Nepomuk de la Croce shows the two youngsters playing for their father, who holds a violin, while a portrait of their mother looks down soberly from the wall behind them. The first published music for piano four hands dates from 1777, the work of Sir Charles Burney (1726–1814), who also has the distinction of having written the first sonata for piano three hands. In the nineteenth century the great majority of music for piano four hands was transcribed from works for orchestra, which were otherwise rarely heard outside of the great European capitals. Composers and publishers were quick to realize the potential market for orchestral compositions in transcription in every town and village. Brahms' *Hungarian Dances* and Dvořák's *Slavonic Dances* stand out among the original works distributed for piano duo.

Among the pioneers of music for two pianos four hands were Johann Christian Bach (1735–1782) and Muzio Clementi (1752–1832). The medium reached its apogee in the works of Franz Liszt (1811–1886), who arranged Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony* and both of his own symphonies for two pianos. Important works for two pianos four hands were also composed or arranged by Brahms, Reger, Saint-Saëns, and Schumann in the nineteenth century, and Bartók, Busoni, Hindemith, and Stravinsky in the twentieth. Charles Ives (1874–1954), ever the iconoclast, wrote *Three Quarter-Tone Pieces* for two pianos tuned a quarter-tone apart.

The only original work for two pianos four hands on this program is Ravel's *Ma mère l'oye*, which the composer wrote in response to a request from friends Ida and Cyprien Godebski. Ravel was fond of their children, Mimi and Jean, both of whom were gifted pianists, and wrote the suite of five duets for them. The premiere performance, however, was entrusted to two girls who were evidently even more talented, Jeanne Lelu and Geneviève Durony, who performed *Ma mère l'oye* at the Salle Gaveau in Paris in 1910, when they were both just ten years old. The popularity of the piano work inspired Ravel to expand and orchestrate it for a ballet, which was produced under the same title in 1912.

For the convenience of concertgoers
the Garden Café remains open until 6:00 pm.

The use of cameras or recording equipment during the
performance is not allowed. Please be sure that cell phones,
pagers, and other electronic devices are turned off.

Please note that late entry or reentry of
the West Building after 6:30 pm is not permitted.

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